

The Judgment of Mr. BAXTER, concerning Ceremonies and Conformity in the Points in Difference betwixt the Church of England, and the Dissenters.

Now Published in Vindication of the Moderate and Learned Part of the Presbyterians, to let the VWorld see that they are not so irreconcilable to the Discipline of the Church of England, as some People would have us believe.

Licensed and Entered according to Order

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Disp. 4.
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Those Modes or Circumstances of Worship, which are necessary *in genere*, but left undetermined by God *in specie*, are left by God to human prudential Determination; (else an Impossibility would be necessary) But many such there are, that are necessary *in genere*, but left undetermined of God *in specie*; therefore many such are left to human prudential Determination.

Disp. 5. p. 400. Sect. 5. Yet it is in the power of man to determine of such Modes and Circumstances as are necessary to the performance of that Worship which God hath instituted in his Word; and therefore lawful Governors may in such cases bind us by their Command.

P. 400. 1. It is left to human Determination, what Places the Publick Assemblies shall be held in.

P. 401. 2. It is left to man to determine of the Time of Holy Duty, except only where God hath determined to the contrary.

Ibid. 3. It is left to the determination of human Prudence, what Utensils to employ about the Publick Worship of God.

Here therefore we must conclude.

P. 423. 1. That every misordering of such great Affairs is the sin of them that do it.

2. But yet that the Subject is not exempted from Obedience, by every such mistake of the Governour, but by some he is.

Ibid. Sect. 67. If the mischusing some Circumstances by Church Governours, be but an inconvenience, and do destroy the ordinance it self, or frustrate the ends of it, we are to obey. 1. He is the Judge of his own work, not we. 2. The thing is not sinful, tho' inconvenient. 3. Obedience is commanded to our Lawful Governours.

P. 424. We must obey in all things Lawful.

And when we do obey in case of miscommanding, it is not a doing of evil, that good may come of it, as some do misconceive; but it is only a submitting to that which is ill commanded, but no evil in him that doth submit; it is the determiner that is the cause of the inconvenience, and not the obeyer. Nor is it inconvenient for to obey, tho' it be worle perhaps to him that commandeth. While he sinneth in commanding, he may make it my duty to obey.

P. 396 Sect. 6. *dis*, 4. We must distinguish between Ceremonies imposable by a Lawful Magistrate or Church-Governours, and such as are imposed by Usurpers, or men without Authority.

T. 398. Sect. 25. *prop*. 12. It may be very sinful to command some Ceremonies, which may lawfully, yea, must in duty be used by the Subject, when they are commanded.

Sect. 27. *prop* 14. Yet certain things which are commonly called Ceremonies, may lawfully be used in the Church, upon human Imposition; and when it is not against the Law of God, no person should disobey the commands of their Lawful Governours in such things.

Of set forms, and the Book of Common-Prayer.

Dis, 4. p. 358, *Prop*, 1. A stinted Liturgy is in it self Lawful.

A stinted Liturgy in some parts of publick Holy Service, is ordinarily necessary.

3. In the parts where it is not of necessity, it may not only be submitted unto, but desired, when the peace of the Church requires,

P. 359. *Prop* 7. The safest way of composing such a publick form, is to take it all, for matter and words, out of the Holy Scripture.

8. Yet is not this of such necessity, but that we may joine in it, or use it, if the form of words be not from Scripture.

Prop 1. A stinted Liturgy is in it self Lawful; and it is thus proved.

Arg. 1. That which is not directly, nor consequentially forbidden by God, remaineth lawful; a stinted Liturgie, is not directly, or consequentially forbidden of God, therefore it remaineth Lawful.

The major is undoubted, because nothing but a prohibition can make a thing unlawful: *Sin is the transgression of a Law; when there is no Law, there is no Transgression.* And yet I have heard very reverend Men answer this, *That it is enough that it is not commanded though not forbidden* which is plainly to deny both Scripture and Civil Principles.

P. 361. Now for the minor, That a stinted Liturgy is not forbidden, we need no other proof than that no prohibition can be produced.

P. 364. *Arg*. 6. If it be lawful for the People to use a stinted form of words, in publick Prayer, then is it in it self lawful for the Pastors; but it is Lawful for the People; for the Pastor's Prayer (which they

they must pray over with him, and not only hear it) is a stinted Form to them, even as much as if he had learnt it out of a Book; they are to follow him in his method and words, as if it were a Book-Prayer.

Arg. 7. It is lawful to use a Form in Preaching, therefore a stinted Liturgy is lawful.

1. Because Preaching is a part of that Liturgy.

2. Because the Reason is the same for Prayer as for that, in the main.

Argument 8. That which hath been the Practice of the Church in Scripture-times, and down to this day, and is yet the practice of almost all the Churches of Christ on Earth, is not like to be unlawful but such is the use of some stinted Forms of Publick Service. *There fore &c.* That it was so in the Jewes Church, and approved by Christ I have shewed; That it hath been of ancient use in the Church since Christ, as it is, at this day, in use in *Affrick, Asia, Europe*; Even among the Reformed Churches in *France, Holland, Geneva*, and is so well known, that I think I need not stand to prove it: yea those few that seem to disuse it, do yet use it, in Psalms and other parts of Worship.

P. 421. As for the Common-Prayer it self, I never rejected it, because it was a forme we thought simply unlawful, because it was such a form; but have made use of it, and would do again in the like case.

Of Ceremonies.

The Ceremonies controverted amongst us, were, specially the Surplice, the Gesture of Kneeling in receiving the Lords Supper, the Ring in Marriage, Laying the hand upon a Book in taking an Oath, the Organs; and Church-Musick, Holi-days, Altars Rails, and the Cross in Baptism.

Of the Surplice.

P. 409. Some decent Habit is necessary; either the Magistrate, or the Minister himself, or the Associated Pastors must determine what; I think neither Magistrate nor Synod should do any more then hinder undecency; but yet if they do more, and tye all to one habit (and suppose it were an undecent habit) yet this is but an imprudent use of power; it is a thing within the Magistrates reach, he doth not an *aliene* work, but his own work amiss; therefore the thing in it self being *lawful*, I would obey him, and use that Garment, if I could not be dispensed with, yea though, secondarily, whiteness be to signify Purity. and so it be made a teaching sign, yet would I obey.

Of kneeling at the Sacrament.

P. 411. But yet as sinful as this Gesture was imposed, for my part I did obey the imposers, and would do, if it were to be done again: rather than disturb the peace of the Church, or be deprived of its Communion; for God having made some Gesture necessary, and confined me to none, but left it to human determination, I shall submit to Magistrates in their proper work, even when they miss it in the manner;

I am not sure that Christ intended the example of himself, and his Apostles, as obligatory to us that shall succeed; I am sure it proves *strongly* *lawful*, but I am not sure that it proves it necessary, (tho' very convenient) but I am sure he hath *commanded me obedience and peace.*

Of the Ring in Marriage.

P. 401. As for the Ring in Marriage, I see no reason to scruple the lawfulness of it, for tho' the Papists make a Sacrament of Marriage. yet we have no reason to take it for an Ordinance of Divine Worship, any more than the solemnizing of a Contract between a Prince and People; all things are sanctified and pure to the pure.

Of Organs and Church Musick.

P. 412. As for Organs, or other Instruments of Musick in God's Worship, they being a help partly Natural, and partly Artificial, to the exhilarating of the Spirits, for the praise of God, I know no Argument to prove them simply unlawful, but what would prove a Cup of Wine unlawful, or the tune and Meeter, and Melody of singing, unlawful.

Of Holy-days.

P. 412. 413. Nor for my part do I make any scruple to keep a day in Remembrance of any Eminent Servant of Christ, or Martyr, to praise God for their Doctrine, or Honour their Memorial.

But the hardest part of the Question is, Whether it be lawful to keep days in Celebrating the Memorial of Christ's Nativity, Circumcision, Fasting, Transfiguration, Ascension, and such like.

P. 416. And yet for all this, I am resolved, If I live where such Holy-Days as these are observed, to censure no man for observing them. nor would I deny them Liberty to follow their Judgment, if I had the power of their Liberties, provided they use not reproach and violence to others, and seek not to deprive them of their Liberties,

P. 417. Yea more, I would not only give men their Liberty in this, but if I lived under a Government that peremptorily commanded it, I would observe the outward rest of such a Holy-day, and I would preach on it; and join with the Assemblies in God's VVorship on it: Yea, I would thus observe the day, rather than offend a weak Brother, or hinder any man's Salvation, much more rather than I would make any Division in the Church.

Of Altars and Rails.

Ibid. As for the next Ceremony, the Name and Form of an Altar; no doubt but it is a thing indifferent, whether the Table stand this way or that way; and the Primitive Churches commonly used the Names of Sacrifice, and Altar, and Priest, and I think lawfully; for my part I shall not be he that shall condemn them.

Ibid. I conceive that the dislike of these things in England (the Form and Name of an Altar and the Rails about it) was not as if they were simply evil.

P. 401, 402. VVhether we shall receive the Lords Supper at a Table, or in our Seats; or whether the Table shall be of VVood or Stone; whether it shall be Round, Long, or Square; whether it shall stand in the *East* or *West* end of the Temple, or in the middle; whether it shall have Rails or no Rails, all these are left to humane Prudence.

Of the Cross in Baptism.

P. 417. But of all our Ceremonies, there is none that I have more suspected to be simply unlawful, than the Cross in Baptism.

P. 418. Yet I dare not peremptorily say, That it is unlawful, nor will I condemn either Ancients or Moderns that use it; nor will I make any disturbance in the Church about it, more than my own forbearance will make.

I presume not to censure them that judge it lawful, but only give the Reasons that make me doubt, and rather think it to be unlawful, tho' still with a suspicion of my own Understanding, and a love and honour to Dissenters.

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